

Customer-Driven Overage Document Review

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PROBLEM STATEMENT

Many Standardization Management Activities (SMAs) face insufficient resources to adequately manage DoD standards and specifications in accordance with Defense Standardization Program (DSP) policy. This is especially true in the area of overage document reviews. Overage document reviews based exclusively on the age of a document divert scarce resources away from current, higher priority work, which is more likely to be based on customer need.

TASKING

The Defense Standardization Program Office (DSPO) tasked the Electronic Document Development, Coordination, and Maintenance IPT to review and recommend improvements to the coordination and maintenance of standardization decisions. In this document, the IPT specifically examines and offers improvements to the overage document review process, which places significant demands on the time and resources of Preparing Activities (PAs).

CURRENT SITUATION

DoD 4120.24-M, *Defense Standardization Program*, states that, “all documents identified as active in the ASSIST database must be reviewed within five years from the time they were last updated or validated.” The mandatory review based on date forces the PA to expend resources to conduct document reviews and updates without regard to the higher priority work they are executing to support current customers and procurements. Updates of overage documents compete with current documents, forcing the PA to either neglect overage document updates or neglect support to current customers.

RECOMMENDATION

The IPT recommends that DoD 4120.24-M base the requirement to conduct periodic document reviews and updates on customer need rather than on a time period alone. PAs should prioritize overage documents along with other standardization projects to best meet customer needs. The IPT recommends establishing a pilot program to test the implementation and results of a customer-driven review proc-

ess. ASSIST Enhancement 12 must be implemented before the pilot program can be conducted.¹

CONCEPT OVERVIEW

If the pilot program is successful, the IPT recommends that the following language be inserted into DoD 4120.24-M to reflect the change in emphasis from a time-based review standard to a standard based on time and customer need. (The proposed process is depicted in Figure 1 and also in Tab D1.01, Appendix B, Figure P.) The language in DoD 4120.24-M may require revision based on the outcome of the pilot program.

“C.5.9.2. *Overage Document Review*. Standardization documents may become obsolete, as technical requirements or DSP policy change over time and references are updated or cancelled. Standardization documents should be reviewed periodically to ensure they are current and still needed. Actual document review shall be based on customer need. Users of a document may request that the Preparing Activity conduct an overage document review. Documents generally will be reviewed only if a request from a user is received, but a PA may review an overage document at his own discretion, even if no customer request has been received. Note that an overage document need not be updated to change administrative content (i.e., custodian, reviewer). These changes can be accomplished on the administrative page of the document in ASSIST.”

“C.5.9.2.1. *Time Elapsed Between Reviews*. When a standardization document becomes five years old from the date of publication, most recent update, or latest previous reaffirmation, the DoDSSP shall issue an e-mail notice. The notice shall be sent to those users showing ASSIST-registered interest in that document. The notice shall ask if any users are experiencing problems with the use or application of the document, or have technical issues with the document. The notice shall include the contact information for the current PA.”

“C.5.9.2.2. *Document Update*. If the PA receives comments concerning problems with a document from the user community within the 45-day comment period, the PA shall address the comments within 90 days from the close of the comment period. The PA can indicate agreement with the user’s comments and indicate that a standardization project will be initiated to update the document. The PA also may provide reasons to the commenter as to why the comment will not be incorporated.”

¹ ASSIST Enhancement 12 requires that a direct link to engineering points of contact (POCs) be added to the ASSIST POC screen.

“C.5.9.2.3. *Document Reaffirmation*. If after 45 days the PA has not received any replies, the PA shall notify the DODSSP that no technical problems were reported. The DODSSP shall enter a note into the document information page in ASSIST stating that the user community has been solicited for technical comments and no problems were reported with using the document. On this basis, the document has been reaffirmed. In addition, this note shall be used if after receipt of technical comments from users, investigation by the PA and consultation with the submitter of the comment reveals that no change to the document is warranted.”

“C.5.9.2.4. *Non-Government Standards*. For non-government standards, a DoD reaffirmation notice is not required. NGS bodies generally have unique procedures to ensure their standards remain valid. All the DoD adopting activity must do is verify that there is still a need for DoD adoption of the NGS and notify the DODSSP.”

“C.5.9.3. *Failure to Take Action on User Request*. If a Preparing Activity fails to resolve a user comment or does not take action on a user feedback within 90 days of the close of the comment period, the commenter should contact the DSPO. The original e-mail notification will include contact information for DSPO. DSPO shall then contact the PA and cognizant DepSO to resolve the commenter’s concerns.”

In today’s environment, this process could be an offshoot of the ASSIST Alert service. Notifications should be given to activities that have expressed interest in a document at any level (user, custodian, and so forth), and they should be notified that the document is overage and under review by the PA. This notification should occur quarterly so that the number of documents in any one notice is not unmanageable. The notification should not be daily as documents become overage because this would result in many messages being received by many users who might be only marginally interested in a particular document.

In the future, the document list could be posted to the Information Exchange System (IES) Portal, as described by the Infrastructure IPT. A reviewer could click on a document to open a response form to the PA. The to-be document development and coordination process described in Tab D1.01 also would include more robust workload tracking and management capability for the PA. For example, this capability would allow the PA to see upcoming workload and take appropriate action. See C.5.9.2.

Figure 1. Customer-Driven Document Review Process

